A HITCHCOCK PUBLICATION

JULY 1984

INFOSYSTEMS

THE MAGAZINE FOR INFORMATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT

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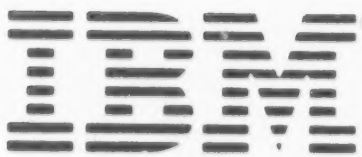

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INFOSYSTEMS

July 1984 Volume 31 Number 7

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Editorial Offices
Headquarters: Hitchcock Building
Wheaton, IL 60188, (312) 665-1000
110 Fulton St.
Boston, MA 02109, (617) 723-8970
1021 S. Wolfe Rd., Suite 275
Sunnyvale, CA 94086, (408) 730-0131

Published by Hitchcock Publishing Co.
Wheaton, IL, President, Loren M. Walsh
Phone: (312) 665-1000 Cable: HITCHPUB
Telex: 72-0404
One of the
ABC PUBLISHING *Companies*
ABC Publishing, President, Robert G. Burton
1330 Avenue of the Americas
New York, New York 10019

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Info Industry

Novel distribution channels may emerge for microcomputers

By 1985 computer retailers may be hard put to house the inventory of the more than 170 personal computer manufacturers now in business. According to Strategic Inc., a market research firm in San Jose, CA, there is an inadequate distribution system to cope with the substantial expected growth rate. Strategic expects the number of personal computers (PCs) shipped worldwide in 1982 (2.25 million) to double by 1985, thus forcing new distribution channels to open up over the next few years.

"The personal computer distribution chain is currently in a state of flux and is under pressure, due to the more than 645 different products now on the market," says Yves Blanchard, vice president of marketing for Strategic.

Blanchard foresees three novel new channels opening up as a result of this pressure, the first of which is the pyramid scheme. This involves a network of door-to-door salespeople selling computers like encyclopedias.

Another channel Blanchard expects to emerge on a widespread basis is what he terms "the PC supermarket." This would collect under one roof a variety of computer hardware and software sold by representatives of each system.

Still another method which might emerge is teleshopping: a giant central shopping and distribution mechanism similar to the merchandising channels now developing via teletext and videotex. More conventional channels will probably also be used to handle the escalating supply of personal computers.

For example, Blanchard expects the national or regional broker sales force to be successful in managing the surplus supply of systems. This procedure will require a salesperson to call directly on end users with complementary product lines from different manufacturers. Systems houses, too, could be effective distributors, especially those that support large corporations where the microcomputer acts as an intelligent terminal for the company's mainframe.

At any rate, both systems houses and retailers will likely expand sales efforts into horizontal and vertical markets during the next few years. Strategic identifies the particularly promising markets for PC growth as education, medical and pharmaceutical, accounting, banking, and legal areas. Although these markets will require customized software and a sales and support staff familiar with each vertical or horizontal market, Blanchard says that the effort in adding this capability will be well-rewarded.

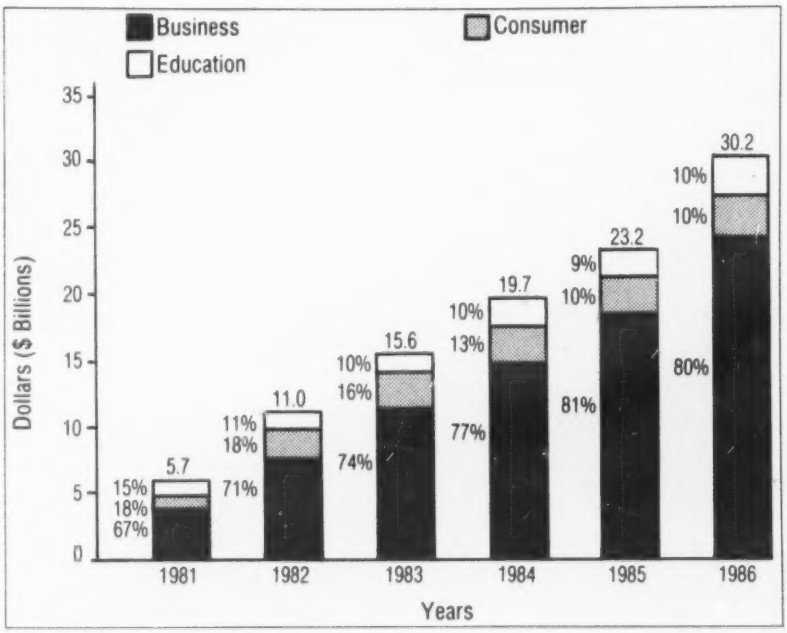

Exhibit 2.9—PC Marketing Growth by End Use 1981-1986 ($ Billions)

Source: Strategic Inc

The research firm's analysis of the microcomputer market shows that the lion's share will be made up of large corporation sales. The second largest market segment will be business and professional.

As for the consumer market, Strategic says that distribution of low-cost home computers is expected to go the way of video games and other consumer electronic products. Home computers will continue to be sold through established microcomputer retailers such as department, stereo, and radio and TV stores, as well as through new entrants such as discount, drug, jewelry, hobby, camera and certain grocery stores.

WLM

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Management

6 reasons why documentation is needed

"Documentation is vital in data processing because of the unforgiving nature of computers," says Emanuel Katzin, a Houston-based consultant. Leading a session at the annual Independent Computer Consultants Assn. conference, he pointed out six reasons why documentation is needed.

1. *Productivity.* Nontechnical users of computers can't be expected to remember all the necessary steps to perform computer functions. Documentation can provide necessary checklists of these functions.

2. *Reference.* Documentation is a source of detail about system operation for those who need it.

3. *Continuity.* Documentation is "life insurance" for the system in case design team members leave the company.

4. *Consistency.* Good documentation tells users how to input data accurately.

5. *Training.* If documentation will be used as a training tool, it should be